Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT May 10, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "THE CHILD AT THE FAMILY TABLE." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Today I'd like to tell you the story of how a five-year-old boy helped his whole family to have a better diet. We'll call them the "A" family--for lack of their real name.

When Bob was a baby, the doctor told Mrs. A exactly what to feed him. And she followed the doctor's directions--to the letter. He had milk--orange juice--cereal--pureed vegetables and fruits. His diet gradually became more varied and included meat--ground or chopped--and simple desserts.

For sometime Mrs. A cooked two sets of meals--one for Bob, and another for Mr. A and herself. And then she discovered that Bob's meals weren't much different from theirs. Of course, he got smaller servings--and his food was seasoned less--but on the whole, they were very much the same.

So Mrs. A decided to have just one set of meals. And since Bob's food was so important in keeping him well and helping him to grow--she knew that it was best to plan the family meals around Bob's needs. She wanted to be absolutely sure that Bob got the kind of food that would produce strong bones and teeth--build tissue--make red blood--and furnish energy. That meant that Mother and Father would also get foods rich in vitamins--minerals--and protein.

All three of the "A" family drink milk--and Mrs. A always makes sure that Bob gets three to four glasses during the day. He loves to drink milk--especially when he can pour it into his glass from his own little pitcher. And besides that Bob gets some extra milk in cooked foods. Sometimes Mrs. A cooks cereal in milk--or she

combines milk with vegetables to make a cream soup--then again she uses milk in dessert, as for custards or milk sherbet.

Eggs are also important in the family meals. During the spring, when eggs are low in price, each member of the family has an egg a day. And all through the year, Mrs. A makes sure that young Bob gets at least four or five eggs a week. Some times, they have soft-cooked eggs--sometimes poached--shirred--or baked. And, of course, she uses eggs in custards and souffles.

Mrs. A is also careful to see that there are plenty of fruits and vegetables in the day's meals. Four servings of fruits and vegetables are the very least she would think of having during a day--and she usually plans to have more.

She makes sure that one of the fruits or vegetables will furnish vitamin C. The citrus fruits--oranges and grapefruit--and tomatoes are rich in this vitamin. So are "greens" and vegetables of the cabbage and turnip family. She uses potatoes and sweetpotatoes often, because they give a good return in food value for what they cost. And she rounds out her list of fruits and vegetables with prunes and other dried fruits--dried peas and beans--as well as canned fruits and vegetables.

Bob likes to chew carrot chips and crisp green lettuce or cabbage leaves--rabbit fashion. And his mother often tucks some extra vitamins and minerals into a sandwich by creaming the butter with chopped lettuce--cabbage--watercress--or parsley.

Bob's stomach is still so small--that his mother wants to make sure that every bite he eats is just as full of food value as possible. When she cooks vegetables--she's careful to keep as much as possible of the vitamins and minerals that are found in the raw vegetable. She cooks the vegetables in as little water as possible. She stops cooking them as soon as they're tender. And she makes use of any liquid that's left.

Quite often the dessert for the family is fruit. Sometimes it's an orange--an apple--a banana--or some other fresh fruit in season. Sometimes it's several

different kinds of fruit diced up in a fruit cup. Other times, the family has stewed dried fruits. And as a special treat they have fruit in a fruit gelatin--either plain or whipped.

Cereals are another "must" in their diet plan. For breakfast there's whole-grain cereal, with whole milk and a little sugar. Most of the time, their bread is made from whole-grain flour, too. And they often have rice--grits--macaroni--or noodles at noon or at night. And, of course, these also count as sources of energy.

Bob's father likes to have meat once a day--and Bob gets his portion, too. At least once a week this meat dish is either liver--kidney--or sweetbreads. Mrs. A usually broils tender chops--steaks--and liver. She roasts larger cuts of meat, if they're tender--and braises them if they're not so tender. (By braising, I mean browning the meat in a little fat and then cooking it slowly in a covered pan with a little moisture added.)

Like so many other boys and girls--Bob loves candy and other sweets. And since he gets all the food values he needs in the main part of his meal--he usually gets a simple dessert at the end. He likes custards--puddings--ice cream--fruit sherbet--plain cookies--and plain cake. And Mr. A has come to think those are pretty good desserts for a man who has an office job.

Bob really likes food with a simple, natural flavor. But his father sometimes likes more highly seasoned foods. So Mrs. A wisely takes out Bob's portions first, and then adds pepper--mustard--sauce--or spices.

That's the story in general. It seems to me Bob's pretty lucky to have a mother who plans meals so carefully--so he'll get all the food values he needs. But I think his mother and father are also lucky--to have a special reason for checking up on their own diets. The family meals are all wholesome and nutritious--now that Bob eats at the family table.

#######